

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 02403 111508Z
ACTION EB-08

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EIND, MTN, CA
SUBJECT: FLORENCE AGREEMENT

REF: STATE 112655

1. AS INSTRUCTED REFTEL, EMBASSY ON MAY 9 RAISED GROWING U.S. CONCERN OVER GOC INACTION ON ADHERENCE TO FLORENCE AGREEMENT WITH EXTAFF ASSISTANT UNDER SECRETARY MCPHAIL. WE STRESSED DISSATISFACTION OF U.S. PUBLISHING INDUSTRY WITH FAILURE OF GOC, SO FAR, TO RECIPROCATE U.S. ELIMINATION OF BARRIERS TO BOOK TRADE. WE ALSO RECALLED SPECIFIC LINKAGE MADE BY HOUSE-SENATE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE BETWEEN ELIMINATION OF U.S. "MANUFACTURING CLAUSE" AND CANADIAN ACTION ON FLORENCE AGREEMENT, NOTING THAT RISK OF ADVERSE CONGRESSIONAL REACTION INCREASES WITH CONTINUING CANADIAN DELAY.

2. MCPHAIL REPLIED THAT, AS HE KNEW U.S. WAS AWARE, GOC HAD CONSIDERED TAKING ACTION TO REDUCE BOOK TARIFF TO ZERO FOR INTERIM PERIOD IN CONTEXT OF NEW BUDGET PRESENTED LAST MONTH. WHILE REGRETTABLE, GOC WAS UNABLE TO ACT AS CONTEMPLATED AND BUDGET

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"WINDOW" HAD NOW BEEN PASSED. MCPHAIL SAID HE UNDERSTOOD U.S. POSITION AND WOULD ASSURE THAT THIS, INCLUDING EXPRESSED VIEW OF CONGRESS, WAS AGAIN CALLED TO ATTENTION OF GOC MINISTERS. ALL HE COULD PROMISE, MCPHAIL SAID, WAS FURTHER RESPONSE ON TIMING OF GOC ACTION ON ISSUE WITHIN "SEVERAL WEEKS".

3. WHEN PRESSED, MCPHAIL SAID "SEVERAL WEEKS" COULD TAKE UNTIL LATE JUNE. HE REFUSED TO SPECULATE ON WHETHER GOC ACTION, WHEN IT CAME, WOULD BE ADHERENCE TO FLORENCE AGREEMENT -- WHICH WE EMPHASIZED WAS U.S. DESIRE IN LIGHT UZZFEYORONTO# UNDERSTANDING

AND SUBSEQUENT U.S. ACTION -- OR INTERIM DUTY ELIMINATION AS PROPOSED BY CANADIAN PUBLISHING INDUSTRY LATE IN 1977. MCPHAIL NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT DUTY ELIMINATION APPROACH WAS SUITED TO TYPE OF BUDGET-RELATED ACTION GOC HAD CONSIDERED TAKING. SINCE THIS OPPORTUNITY WAS PAST, ACTION ON FLORENCE AGREEMENT WAS AGAIN A CURRENT OPTION.

4. COMMENT. MCPHAIL WAS, UNCHARACTERISTICALLY, ALMOST APOLOGETIC IN DISCUSSING THIS ISSUE AND CLEARLY RECOGNIZED LEGITIMACY OF U.S. EXPECTATIONS. WE INTEND TO FOLLOW-UP THIS MATTER PERSISTENTLY, INCLUDING WITH OTHER MINISTRIES, TO STRENGTHEN HAND OF THOSE IN GOC WHO RECOGNIZE CANADIAN OBLIGATION TO ACT ON BOOK TARIFFS. ENDERS

NOTE BY OC/T: # AS RECEIVED.

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